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Sociolinguistic Impacts on Sindh: A Case Study on the Sindhi Language

Dr. Amir Ali Shah[1], Ume Hani Sindhu Isani[2], and Dr. Muhbat Ali Shah[3]

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Sindhi, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Shaheed Benazirabad, Sindh Pakistan
2. Lecturer, Department of Sindhi, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Shaheed Benazirabad, Sindh Pakistan
3. Assistant Professor Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Sindh, Pakistan

This article examine Pakistan's educational and linguistic policies and how they impact the country's sociolinguistic landscape. The study found a complicated relationship between educational language and social identity in Pakistan. The descriptive method analyzes Pakistan's historical, social, and linguistic contexts to evaluate policy-making decisions. It also explains why the two languages, Urdu and English, were proclaimed the state's official languages, ignoring the newly constituted nation's local regional dialects. Data were gathered from secondary sources such as the Sindh Public Library, Sindhi textbooks, news articles, Google Scholar, and published articles. According to the study's findings, a more inclusive language policy that recognizes and promotes regional languages could help bridge Pakistan's linguistic divide and foster a stronger sense of national identity. It is essential for policymakers to prioritize language diversity and inclusion in order to promote unity and understanding among all citizens. The article concluded and recommend that language politics in Pakistan have exacerbated existing social tensions and hampered the country's ability to achieve true national unity, particularly in Sindh province, where the Sindhi language is widely used.

Introduction

Language plays an important role in communication and understanding different cultures. It allows individuals to connect and share ideas across borders. Without language, there would be a significant barrier to forming relationships and building a sense of community. Language helps bridge the gap between people and

helps create a sense of unity and belonging (Panhwar, Khatwani, & Abbasi, 2019). Analyzing a state's language and education policy, national and indigenous language status, and sociopolitical and linguistic environment are crucial. The reader's comprehension of the sociolinguistic relevance and the existence or absence of major and minor languages in the official and power domains is aided by this information. Sindhi is one of the oldest languages in India; in fact, it was the first language that Muslims, or Arabs, learned when they immigrated to India in large numbers. It is also the language of the Pakistani province of Sindh, which is why many Arab writers claim that the people who lived in the capital of Sind, al-Mansura, spoke Sindhi. Arab historians (in this example, the author of Ajaib ul Hind) refer to the language as 'Hindi', despite the fact that they frequently fail to distinguish between the several Indian languages and combine them together(David, Ali, & Baloch, 2017). A frequent name for "Hindi." Syed Salman Nadwi, on the other hand, speculates that this language may be Sindhi and refers to it as the first translation of the Quran into any Indian language, and that the name "Hindi" was originally used to apply to all Indian languages. This would imply that the translation was not into the Hindi we know today(Bughio). However, the only subject covered in al-Beruni's text—or at least in its English translation—is the "Hindu alphabet." "The Hindus write from the left to the right like Greeks," is the first statement made about it. The general features of the Brahmi script are then explained, features that are shared by all of its variants. These features include an abugida writing system, phonetic characteristics, and a syllabic structure(Khokhar, Memon, & Siddique, 2016).When al-Beruni was in India in 1020–1030 AD, there is evidence besides his that suggests Sind had a "Sindhized Arabic script." This is from the book Kitab al Fihrist, which was put together by the Arab author al-Nadim. The book also mentions that in the region of Sindh, people used Arabic letters to write their languag(Bughio, 2006). Nahj al-Ta'allum, an Arabic book, was published in the 16th century by Makhdum Jafar of Dadu. At that time, a lot of literature had been produced in Sindhi. The author also made a Persian translation of it in 1568. It dealt with education. Although Nabi Bakhsh Baloch released a summary in 1969 titled Hasil al-Nahj based on both works, they are no longer in existence. The original text in Sindhi and its Persian translation were lost over time(Liljegren & Akhunzada, 2017).

Sindhi language Before Partition

The education of Sindhi was dated, particularly that of the Zamindars, or offspring of feudal lords. The government of Bombay created a team to recommend ways to rectify this. During the Urdu-Hindi conflict that raged throughout British India at the time, Urdu came to be identified with Muslims. Hence, the Commission members believed that teaching Urdu was one way to appease Muslims(Asif, 2005). Syed Shamsuddin Kadri was the only one of these lawmakers to sign his minute of disagreement. The other five members signed the document. The other five members signed the document, but Syed Shamsuddin Kadri was the only one of these lawmakers to sign his minute of disagreement(Hassan, 2016). This committee was established in 1915, and a year later it turned in its report. It made many recommendations, including that Persian and, to a lesser extent, Arabic instruction

be promoted, but it declined to revisit the contentious issue of Urdu. Consequently, Sindhi remained the medium of teaching at the school level. The school would continue to face challenges in reconciling the linguistic diversity among its students(Rahman, 2006).

This article offers a critical analysis of the language policies and linguistic changes brought about by language policies both before and after Pakistan's creation. It also critically evaluates the historical, sociopolitical, and linguistic context of Pakistan. It also delves into the impact of these policies on the country's diverse linguistic landscape. The political reasons for designating English and Urdu as the official languages of the state while disregarding the state's native tongues are thoroughly discussed in the critique. The critique argues that this decision has perpetuated a system of linguistic inequality and marginalization in Pakistan. This paper used a descriptive stance, concentrating on the historical details that are fueling the sociolinguistic instability in Pakistan, particularly in Sindh, the country's second-biggest province.

Literature Review

The current review critically examines Pakistan's language and education strategies, as well as the politics of language. The information was gathered from a variety of sources. These are the more broad resources, which include diverse research studies and historical examinations of the region's languages. The review also analyzes the implications of these strategies for social cohesion and national identity within the context of language, highlighting the need for further research in this area. The review ultimately calls for greater support and investment in preserving linguistic diversity to maintain cultural heritage and foster inclusive societies.

In 1832, India was colonized by the British Empire, and English became the official language. In 1843, the British conquered Sindh and annexed it into the Bombay Presidency. The elite classes registered their children in expensive English schools to show social prosperity and political affiliation. Thus, English became synonymous with power and prestige in Indian society. It also became the language of choice for conducting official business and writing government documents. It also became the medium of instruction in higher education institutions and the preferred language for international communication and trade(Panhwar et al., 2019).The British government's decision to make English literacy a key eligibility factor for government employment favored the elite class, allowing them to secure high-ranking positions while excluding the middle and working classes from the main population. This contributed to the perpetuation of social inequality. This perpetuation of social inequality further widens the gap between the upper and lower classes in society. It also made it increasingly difficult for individuals from lower classes to achieve upward mobility(David et al., 2017).

Before 1947, the Sociolinguistic Situation in the Subcontinent

Sindh, often considered the 7000-year-old civilization, is a sensitive and problematic region in Pakistan, with its Sindhi language history dating back to 2500 years ago, influenced by ethnic and linguistic issues. It is important to understand and respect the complex history and culture of Sindh in order to work towards peace and harmony in the region. The region has faced ongoing challenges and conflicts due to its diverse population and historical significance(Bughio).Scholars suggest that Sindhi is derived from the Assames branch of the Indo-Aryan group, while Trumpp (1872) claims it is the daughter language of Sanskrit. However, Sanskrit and its daughter languages have been the primary communication languages in the region for centuries. The language has also been influenced by Arabic and Persian, as well as various Tibeto-Burman languages. It is also spoken in parts of Nepal and Bhutan(Khokhar et al., 2016). In 712 AD, the Arab conquest of Sindh led to the spread of Islam, converting many Sindh, particularly the labor class, and dividing the Sindhi nation into two major native communities: Hindu-Sindhi and Muslim-Sindhi. The Muslim-Sindhi community became dominant in Sindh, leading to tensions between the two communities. The tensions between the two communities would persist for many years to come, ultimately shaping the social and political landscape of Sindh, particularly in regards to issues(Panhwar et al., 2019).In 1530 AD, Persian was declared the official language of business, education, and literature by Mughal King Baber. The elite class adopted Persian, and Persian lexical items and structural features were deliberately introduced into local languages. However, Persian failed to gain lingua franca status in Hindustan due to its different script and structure. Therefore, there was a need for a language acceptable to both the Mughal Empire and Hindustan's people. The result was the creation of Urdu. This new language was a blend of Persian, Arabic, and local dialects. This unique mix of languages allowed Urdu to become the common language of communication in the region. This common language helped bridge the gap between different cultures and regions in South Asia(Bughio, 2009).

After 1947, Sociolinguistic Conditions in Pakistan

On August 14, 1947, the British divided Hindustan into India and Pakistan based on the two-nation theory, which argued that Hindus and Muslims were distinct nations and needed separate states for their religious practices. Hindu extremists declared Muslims non-Indians and demanded the expulsion of all Muslims from India, highlighting the tension between religious ideologies and ethnicity(Liljegren & Akhunzada, 2017). After 1947's partition, mass migration began between India and West Pakistan, with Muslims (now Muhajirs) and Hindus (East and West Pakistan) settling in Sindh province. The majority of Indian Muslim refugees spoke Urdu, causing significant changes in the political, geographic, economic, sociolinguistic, and cultural situation of the province. The situation eventually led to tensions and conflicts between the local Sindhi population and the Urdu-speaking immigrants. The tensions and conflicts between the two groups have persisted for decades, leading to sporadic outbreaks of violence(Hassan, 2016).The mass settlement of refugees in Sindh has significantly impacted the sociolinguistic scenario, with the population increasing to 86.9% in Hyderabad and 59% in Karachi

within a year of independence, turning native people into minorities and turning major economic hubs into refugee cities(Asif, 2005). In 1947, Urdu was declared the official language in Sindh, causing tension between native Sindhi and refugees. The Sindhi who constituted 78% of the population, rejected the settlement of refugees and Urdu as their official language, resulting in the creation of Pakistan. The Urdu-speaking refugees, who were primarily from India, supported the decision, leading to the eventual establishment of Pakistan(Asif, 2005). Punjab province, comprising the majority of the population and bureaucracy, officially adopted Urdu's writing system to create a script for Punjabi. Before 1947, Punjabi was written in a blend of Sindhi, Persian, and Arabic scripts. After independence, Punjab province supported Urdu's declaration as the official language and the settlement of refugees in Sindh, despite the absence of a written script. This led to the development of a standardized script for Punjabi in the 1950s. The script is known as the Shahmukhi script, and it is now widely used for writing Punjabi in Pakistan. Prior to the development of the Shahmukhi script, Punjabi was primarily written in the Arabic script. The Arabic script was not well-suited for accurately representing the sounds of Punjabi(Rahman, 2006). Sindhi faced political and bureaucratic challenges in Punjab, dominated by Punjabis and Muhajirs, which they viewed as attempts to undermine their economy, culture, and language, leading to increased tensions and conflict among various ethnic groups. This ultimately resulted in the separation of Sindh from Punjab due to the heightened tensions and conflict among various ethnic groups(Pathan, Shah, Lohar, Khoso, & Memon, 2018). The Sindhi nation faced linguistic shock when Urdu and English were declared official languages in Pakistan, claiming to replace lesser cultural languages. The rulers neglected 75% of the Sindhi population's language, leading to a ban on Sindhi in Karachi. An official pamphlet urged Sindhis to retain their language, and they were denied official jobs due to their lack of understanding of Urdu(Abbasi, 2021). The decision to make Urdu the official language of Pakistan was made to avoid ethnic resistance from Bengal, Sindh, and Baluchistan, who wanted independent status. Elite Urdu speakers, who supported refugees and made Urdu their national language, secured their position in Pakistan. This decision sparked protests in Sindh and East Pakistan, but was curbed using iron hands. The ruling elite of Pakistan has supported Urdu, and ethnic nationalists have never accepted it(Mugheri & Lohar, 2018). In 1972, a language movement against the Bhutto government led to the declaration of Sindhi as the third official language of Sindh Province, causing language riots. In 1977, General Zial-ul-Haq's Marshal Law reversed this decision, allowing Bhutto and Urdu to be the sole official languages of Sindhi(Khokhar et al., 2016). Native languages in Sindh are in endangered zones, spoken by only a few hundred people in remote villages. They are not taught or documented, with children receiving education in English or Urdu and parents also speaking their academic language. The preservation of these native languages is crucial for maintaining cultural heritage and identity. It is important to actively support efforts to promote and protect these endangered languages from disappearing.

Material and Methods

This article utilizes a qualitative descriptive approach to investigate language, analyzing various aspects through extensive data collection, including observations, records, reports, and documents, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. In conclusion, this research contributes valuable insights to the field of linguistics. It serves as a foundation for future studies and advancements in the field. This research is holistic and involves a comprehensive analysis of individual participants' opinions, perspectives, and attitudes. It focuses on what has happened rather than how or why. The data is gathered from various sources, including the constitution of Pakistan, language and education policies, and historical and research studies of veteran linguistics in the region. The in-depth analysis is based on works by Burton, Advani, Baluch, Allana, Shah, and Rahman. This research contributes valuable insights to the field of linguistics. It serves as a foundation for future studies and advancements in the field, ultimately enhancing our knowledge

Results and Discussion

Sindhi, one of India's oldest languages, was the first language Muslims encountered upon their arrival in India. Arab writers mention Sindhi as the language of the people in al-Mansura, the capital of Sind. It was also the language used in the court of Mahmud of Ghazni, who invaded India multiple times between 1000 and 1027. Sindhi is now recognized as one of the official languages of Pakistan. Syed Salman Nadwi calls this the first translation of the Quran into any Indian language, suggesting it might be Sindhi. Later, al-Beruni visited India between 1010 and 1030 and wrote a book called Kitab Ma-li al Hind, which was translated as Alberuni's India (1888). It mentions several Hindu alphabets. However, it is not as explicit in its mention of Sindhi as the earlier source. This could indicate that there was a lack of focus on Sindhi during that time. Malwari and Saindhava are other alphabets used in southern Sind, specifically in Malwashau and Bahamanwa or Almansura. These alphabets are primarily used for writing Sindhi and are considered to be variations of the Arabic script. They have unique characteristics that distinguish them from other scripts used in the region. Nabi Baksh Baloch, a renowned Pakistani Sindhologist, asserts that Saindhava is a Sindhi. The Arabic-Sindhi script, also known as the Sindhized Arabic script, is believed to have been divided into graphemes for typical Sindhi phonemes by adding dots to the corresponding Arabic letters. This script is used primarily for writing the Sindhi language. The Arabic-Sindhi script is also sometimes used for writing other languages, such as Urdu. The script is written from right to left. The Arabic-Sindhi script has been recognized as an official script for Sindhi in Pakistan. It is also known as the Perso-Arabic script. The script is used in various domains, including education, media, and government documents. The script is an important aspect of Sindhi culture and heritage. It has also been adapted for use on digital platforms and software. In the 16th century, Makhdum Jafar of Dadu published Nahj al-Ta'allum, an Arabic work on education, and its Persian version in 1568. These works are no longer extant, but Nabi Bakhsh Baloch published a digest based on them in 1969. The digest emphasized the pupil over the teacher and text, leading to teaching in the mother tongue, which the pupil could understand. This approach to education was considered revolutionary at the time. It challenged

the traditional methods of instruction and paved the way for a more inclusive and effective educational system. During the last days of the Mughal period, Sindhi became the recognized medium of instruction and subject of study in Sind, unlike Punjab and north India. Teachers could not explain the Persian alphabet and vocabulary to small children, but Sindhi textbooks, generally religious, were in circulation in Sind, similar to other Muslim communities. This led to the growth and development of the Sindhi language and literature. This growth and development played a crucial role in preserving the cultural heritage of the Sindhi people. In independent Pakistan, only Bengal and Sind had indigenous languages as the medium of instruction in non-elitist state schools, highlighting resistance against perceived domination by the center through linguistic and cultural symbols. This was a significant step towards promoting linguistic diversity and cultural identity within the education system. Sindhi sentiment in Sind was high due to its involvement in the struggle against Bombay's administrative dominance. The issue had Hindu-Muslim stridency, with Muslim leaders advocating for Sind's separation from the Bombay presidency, citing its distinct cultural and linguistic identity as a separate entity. Muslim leaders fought to separate Sind from the Bombay presidency, claiming it was a distinct cultural and linguistic entity. Hindus feared this would increase Muslim power and create a Muslim majority province. Sindhi played a significant role in the struggle, with Muslims claiming it gave Sind an identity distinct from Bombay. Sindhi-medium children in Sind are forced to read Urdu from class IV to class XII, while Urdu medium children are not required to read Sindhi, resulting in social and cultural inferiority and significant discrimination against free people. This situation perpetuates a cycle of marginalization and erasure of Sindhi culture and language, ultimately leading to the loss of identity and heritage for future generations. In 1971, language teaching in Hyderabad led to riots due to resistance from Mohajir leaders. The Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) decided to examine Mohajir students in Sindhi for the 1972 Secondary School Certificate examination. Mohajir leader Nawab Muzaffar Hussain resisted, leading to processions in Hyderabad. Other cities, including Nawabshah, Mirpur Khas, Hyderabad, and Karachi, were also affected. The BISE eventually decided to allow Mohajir students to take the examination in Urdu. The decision marked a significant victory for the Mohajir community, as it recognized their right to take the examination in their native language.

Table 1: **The 1981 Examination Statistics Indicate That Sindhi Was The Preferred Mother Tongue Among School Students.**

	Medium of Examination (Percentage)		
	Urdu	**Sindhi**	**English**
Karachi Board	97.90 %	Nil	2.59%
Hyderabad Board	50.80	45.23	3.95
Sukkur Board	21.13 %	78.62 %	0.23%

Source: The Sindh Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Gazettes

The Mohajir Qaumi Movement in 1984 shifted language from a secondary issue in Sind to a symbol of power, culture, and identity for the Sindhi and Mohajir communities, giving it more prominence than it currently enjoys. It contributed to the ethnic tensions in the region. It contributed to the ethnic tensions in the region, leading to violent clashes and further dividing the communities. The findings of this study indicate that Sindhi is considered a crucial aspect of their cultural identity and heritage, and their language is seen as a symbol of resistance against assimilation and a way to preserve their unique cultural heritage. The findings also suggest that efforts to suppress the Sindhi language have only fueled more violence and conflict, further dividing the communities. Efforts to preserve and promote the Sindhi language are crucial for fostering unity and peace among the various communities. Preserving cultural heritage is essential for maintaining a sense of identity and promoting understanding among diverse groups.

Conclusion

The critique explores Pakistan's historical, political, and linguistic landscape, focusing on the Sindh region. It highlights the impact of language politics, especially after Urdu was declared the national language in 1947. The critique calls for a comprehensive survey to analyze the sociolinguistic scenario of Sindh, a linguistically sensitive zone. The survey aims to understand the complexities of language use and attitudes in the region. The survey also examined the impact of language policies on education and social mobility in Sindh and investigated the relationship between language and identity among the diverse communities in the region. It also explores the potential implications for future language planning and development in the area. The Sindhi flag holds symbolic value as a marker of Sindhi ethnic identity, becoming the most important icon since the 19th century, when Sindhis felt alienated due to non-Sindhis domination in cities, the highhandedness of the ruling elite, and policies reducing their power as an ethnic group. The Sindhi intelligentsia used their language as an identity symbol to preserve Sindhi identity and assimilate non-Sindhis, leading to significant creative and academic writing, making Sindhi one of Pakistan's richest languages. However, it's not the primary language for all Sindhi inhabitants. Sindhi is a significant symbol for those resisting adopting an identity, especially in urban areas. Its teaching remains a politicized issue, deeply connected to power and identity, and serves to preserve cultural heritage.

Recommendation

This recommendation encourages Sindhi identification and assimilation among non-Sindhis, resulting in substantial creative and scholarly work and establishing Sindhi as one of Pakistan's richest languages. It also helps to maintain Sindhi culture and customs. This is critical to preserving the country's diversity and togetherness. Future generations must continue to embrace and celebrate Pakistan's diverse language and cultural heritage. This will contribute to a more inclusive and peaceful society in the years to come. It is advised that authorities concentrate education on cultural

knowledge and acceptance. Sociolinguistic impacts on Sindh could be minimized through these efforts. This will help build stronger relationships among different communities. Promoting multilingualism and cultural understanding will also foster unity and mutual respect among the people of Pakistan. By valuing and preserving linguistic diversity, we can create a more harmonious and cohesive society for generations to come.

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